



Protect Public Lands

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Why should you care?

The nearly 1,000,000 square miles that comprise U.S. public landsⁱ are our most treasured natural resource. Whether you're a hiker enjoying the 193,500 miles of trail or one of the total 145 million recreation users, these lands are of enormous personal value to you.ⁱⁱ Public lands are also an economic driver for the recreation economy, generating 508,740 jobs and an economic output of \$52 billion each year.ⁱⁱⁱ

Public Lands Face Unprecedented Threats

The most pressing threats to public lands protections include shrinking National Monuments and expanding energy development. Such erosions, rather than expanding access, usually deprive hikers, anglers, hunters, campers, and all other permitted users the opportunity to enjoy their desired form of recreation, and, at best, obstruct views and generate noise and air pollution.

National Monuments Must Not Be Reduced

In April 2017, President Trump ordered the review of all National Monuments designated since 1996; and Department of Interior (DOI) Secretary Ryan Zinke subsequently recommended cutting 223 million acres of National Monuments protection, converting the areas back to unprotected status.^{iv} In December 2017, the Administration enacted the first cuts, shrinking the Bears Ears National Monument by 85% (the largest shrinkage of protected public land in history) and the Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument by about 40%, for a total of

One Million Sq. Miles of Public Lands in US

Protected:

- **National Parks and Monuments**
- **National Wildlife Refuges**
- **Wilderness**
- **Conservation and Recreation Areas**
- **National Historic Sites, Battlefields, and Memorials**
- **Wild and Scenic Rivers**
- **National Seashores and Lakeshores**
- **National Scenic and Historic Trails**

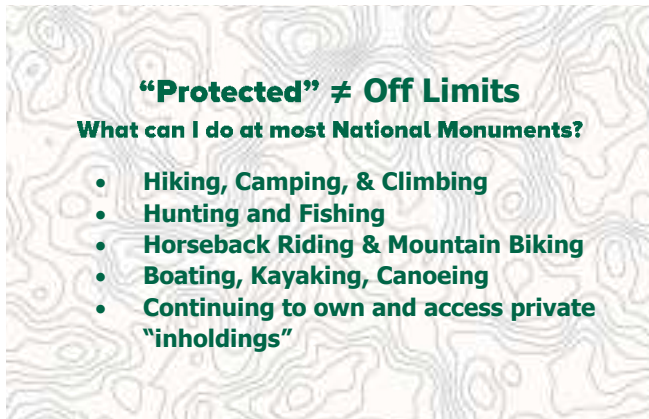
Open to potential natural resource extraction:

- **BLM National System of Public Lands**
- **National Forests**

2,000,000 acres. In February 2018, the Administration opened this acreage, including 245 miles of hiking trails, to claims by developers.^v This puts over half (58%) of the hiking trail mileage in these two monuments at risk.

No New Energy Development on Protected Public Lands

New energy development and its infrastructure will inhibit the hiking experience or prohibit it altogether at certain locations. In fact, already, the new mining claim in the once-protected Grand-Staircase Escalante National Monument will create both a visual disturbance and safety concerns next to a popular hiking site.^{vi}



Violating Public Lands Protections Is Not a Solution to Address Deferred Maintenance

Our public lands are currently suffering from a \$21.5 billion backlog in infrastructure maintenance (often referred to as the “deferred maintenance backlog”). Secretary Zinke has proposed that new energy development on public lands could solve this pressing need. AHS does not believe that the solution for one public lands problem is to create another (essentially “robbing Peter to pay Paul”), especially when it would meet only a small part (31%) of the ever-growing backlog.^{viii} Unfortunately, current legislative proposals do not prohibit Secretary Zinke’s proposal.^{ix} The federal government should fix the maintenance backlog by: halting decreases to public lands funding, revitalizing its capital investment strategy, and forging innovative public-private partnerships.

For more information on public lands and other issues, visit <https://americanhiking.org/advocacy/> or contact Tyler Ray, Director of Policy and Advocacy, tray@americanhiking.org.

Such intrusions also place the livelihoods of local residents at risk. A recent study found that protected public lands increase *per capita* income in rural counties by \$4,360 relative to counties with unprotected public lands.^{vi}

American Hiking Society is not opposed to all energy development on unprotected public lands and recognizes their potential economic value in the right context. However, our support for new development on unprotected land will occur on a case-by-case basis; examining the impact on all aspects of the hiking experience.

ⁱ Public land is any land owned by the federal government (i.e., the citizens of the United States). Public lands with special protected status (see box pg.1) were never privately or state-owned, even before they received their protected status – they were always “public lands”; when the Western states became states, they already contained large percentages of public lands.

ⁱⁱ American Hiking Society, *Hiking Trails In America* 16 (June 2015), https://americanhiking.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/05/AHS_RPT_fnl_LOW.pdf; ProtectOurPublicLand.org, *This Land Is Our Land*, <https://www.protectourpublicland.org/>; Outdoor Industry Association, *The Outdoor Recreation Economy* 16 (2017) https://outdoorindustry.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/04/OIA_RecEconomy_FINAL_Single.pdf.

ⁱⁱⁱ DEP’T OF THE INTERIOR, *ECONOMIC REPORT FY 2016 2* (Sept. 25, 2017), <https://doi.sciencebase.gov/doidv/files/FY%202016%20DOI%20Economic%20Report%202017-09-25.pdf> (426,00 DOI Recreation Jobs on Public Lands); Forest Service, *At A Glance—Job and Income Contributions* (March 2017), <https://www.fs.fed.us/emc/economics/contributions/at-a-glance.shtml>; DEP’T OF THE INTERIOR, *ECONOMIC REPORT FY 2016 2* (Sept. 25, 2017), <https://doi.sciencebase.gov/doidv/files/FY%202016%20DOI%20Economic%20Report%202017-09-25.pdf> (50 billion Recreation Economic Output on Public Lands); Forest Service, *At A Glance—Job and Income Contributions* (March 2017), <https://www.fs.fed.us/emc/economics/contributions/at-a-glance.shtml>.

^{iv} Executive Order, *Review of Designations Under the Antiquities Act* (Apr. 26, 2017), available at <https://www.whitehouse.gov/presidential-actions/presidential-executive-order-review-designations-antiquities-act/>; Press Release, Secretary Zinke Sends Monument Report to the White House, Aug. 24, 2017, available at <https://www.doi.gov/pressreleases/secretary-zinke-sends-monument-report-white-house>.

^v Wilderness Society, *Starting today, companies can mine in former Bears Ears and Grand Staircase-Escalante* (Feb. 2, 2018),

<https://wilderness.org/blog/starting-today-companies-can-mine-former-bears-ears-and-grand-staircase-escalante>; Kathryn Van Waes, American Hiking Society, *What Just Happened in Utah*, <https://americanhiking.org/blog/what-just-happened-in-utah/>; President Donald Trump, *Remarks on Antiquities Act Designations* (Dec. 4, 2017), available at <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefings-statements/remarks-president-trump-antiquities-act-designations/>.

^{vi} Chris D’Angelo, *A Canadian Firm Prepares To Mine Land Trump Cut From Monument Protections*, HUFF. POST (June 19, 2018), available at https://www.huffingtonpost.com/entry/grand-staircase-copper-cobalt-mine-trump-monument_us_5b2948d4e4b0f0b9e9a6074a.

^{vii} HEADWATERS ECONOMICS, *UPDATED SUMMARY: THE ECONOMIC IMPORTANCE OF NATIONAL MONUMENTS TO LOCAL COMMUNITIES* (Spring 2017), <https://headwaterseconomics.org/wp-content/uploads/monuments-summary.pdf> citing Rasker, R., P.H. Gude, M. Delorey. 2013. *The Effect of Protected Federal Lands on Economic Prosperity in the NonMetropolitan West*. *Journal of Regional Analysis and Policy*.

^{viii} See *Exploring Innovative Solutions to Reduce the Department of the Interior’s Maintenance Backlog Before the H. Comm on Natural Resources*, 115th Cong. (2018) (statement of U.S. Dep’t of the Interior), available at <https://www.doi.gov/ocl/doi-maintenance-backlog>; See also U.S. Dep’t of Agric., Office of Inspector Gen., *Forest Service Deferred Maintenance 2* (May 2017), available at <https://www.usda.gov/oig/webdocs/08601-0004-31.pdf>.

^{ix} National Park Service Legacy Act, H.R. 2585/S.751, 115th Cong. (2017) (AHS endorsed legislation); National Park Restoration Act, H.R. 5210/S. 2509, 115th Cong. (2018); Land and National Park Deferred Maintenance Act, H.R. 2863, 115th Cong. (2017); National Park Service Restore Our Parks Act, S. 3172, 115th Cong. (2018).

